THE BUMBLE BEE

Vol. 1, No. 6

APRIL, 1945

Columbia River Packers Association · Astoria, Oregon

EDITORIAL

WE GO NORTH

CRPA is again starting on its Alaska venture. This will be third trip to be made under war time difficulties and limitations. Operation in this very productive but highly concentrated fishery requires a huge investment which must be covered in a very short period of operation. This year for example the total hours of fishing time permitted by the Federal government amount to only 22 days actual fishing time, and in that period the expense entailed in months of preparation and the sending of crews, gear, supplies, etc., must be realized to avoid losses. War time demands still call for composite operations and this year CRPA will operate its Naknek cannery as a joint operation with several other companies who normally operate individually in Bristol Bay. We are looking to the future in this matter, however, and steps are being taken to ready our Nushagak plant, which has not been operated for several years, so that the company can initiate its full and normal Alaska operation whenever conditions can permit.

Naknek Superintendent Ralph Hendrickson is enroute north with the best wishes of the entire organization for a successful fishing season, expressed in confidence that if it can be done Ralph and his crew will do the job.

A Good Program

The industry enjoyed a visit the last week in April from Milo Moore, Washington's new Director of Fisheries, and members of his staff. We can be entirely safe in saying that they left an excellent impression. Their program for the Columbia River which was announced at a meeting with members of the Columbia River Salmon & Tuna Packers Association, is an intelligent and comprehensive one. Best of all the spirit of cooperation was evidenced throughout the entire discussion. The Columbia River problem can only be met by intelligent and complete cooperation between the authorities of the two states and the various elements of the industry and after long years of dissension we appear to be reaching the point where such cooperation will be attained. We can extend to Mr. Moore our best wishes for a successful administration.

Looking Ahead

The industry is entering upon its major activity period for the year with prospects that canneries and processing plants will be busily engaged well into the late fall. Many important matters are under consideration. Renewal of labor contracts; settlement of fish prices; and the gathering of adequate personnel to handle production; are moot questions.

The labor negotiation period is always a critical one. Labor is entitled to reasonable remuneration for its efforts and good working conditions. Employers are entitled to effort commensurate with the wages paid. Astoria can survive as a fishing port only as long as management and labor can get together to a point where this area can place its products on a competitive market on an equal basis with similar products produced in other districts. It is only by thoughtful consideration of all these factors that satisfactory agreements can be reached. We anticipate that a satisfactory solution to all these problems will be reached this year, as they have in the past and that we can all turn to with vigor and determination to do our share in the vital job of producing food for a hungry world.

State Senator H. N. "Barney" Jackson the "one man gang" of the Fisheries Committee.

MILO MOORE
Newly appointed Director for Washington Department of Fisheries

Cover Page

Our cover page this issue is a picture of two CRPA red salmon gillnet boats being towed through the icy waters of Bristol Bay, Alaska to the fishing grounds. Under Federal regulations no motored fishing boats are allowed and the gillnetters when operating must move by sail and oar. The fisherman's work is fast and furious for the short 22-day actual fishing season but his earnings are sometimes more than the worker in the States makes in a year. This picture was taken by Clara W. James, of 6110 N. Concord Avenue, Portland, Oregon.

THE BUMBLE BEE

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Westport, Wn......Gene Matthews
Bay Center.....Carl Rozine

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER...Ned Thorndike

NORTH WE GO TO BRISTOL BAY

CRPA Alaska Venture Begins; Crews Go Soon

CRPA's Alaska venture is underway for the year after preparations extending over several months. Superintendent Ralph Hendrickson, who will operate Naknek Cannery, left Astoria about May 1, and his departure had been proceeded by that, early in April, of Superintendent John Head, of Nushagak Cannery and a crew of machinists and repair men who will place Naknek in readiness for operation and who will survey Nushagak to determine needed renovation for future operation.

One group of fishermen and cannery workers will leave for the North on May 10, and another on May 19. Fishing operations will not start until June 25 and then will continue until July 25, but interim closed periods cut down the number of fishing hours to a total of about 22 days.

For the past two years CRPA has operated Naknek in a joint venture with Libby, McNeill, & Libby, but this year government orders further concentrated operations of Bristol Bay and the operation will be together with Libby, McNeill, & Libby; Nakat Packing Co.; Inter-Coastal Packing Co. Fish will be provided by a fleet of 80 gillnet boats and 10 net setters.

In 1943, CRPA packed 136,000 cases at Naknek and 85,000 cases in 1944. Built in 1938, the main cannery contains four high speed canning lines. Machinery is electrically operated and the plant has its own water system. Other buildings include a power house, radio shack, hospital, living quarters for 500, and three large warehouses 60 by 288 feet.

To Use Residents

Plans are to use about 450 persons in the 1945 operations. About 80 per cent of the fishermen and as many as possible of the cannery workers will be Alaska residents. Can and salt inventories from some of the other companies in the joint venture will be used. In addition to the fish boats, the motor vessel Expansion, and five power-scow tenders will assist in handling the fish.

Heading the Naknek operation will be Ralph Hendrickson with 25 years experience in Alaska canning; Oliver Dawson, assistant superintendent; Herman Geissel, bookkeeper; Lyle Morris, cannery foreman; Roy Fager, beach boss; Walter Boyd, carpenter boss; and Frank Martin, cannery worker boss.

Return to Seattle and Astoria is expected about August 15.

CRPA ALASKA STAFF

Top, left to right: Ralph Hendrickson, superintendent, Naknek cannery; Bill Wootton, general superintendent, Alaska Operations; John Head, superintendent, Nushagak Cannery. Below, left: Oliver Dawson, assistant superintendent, Naknek Cannery. Right: Herman Geissel, bookkeeper at Naknek.

ALASKA SALMON CANNED AND COOKED

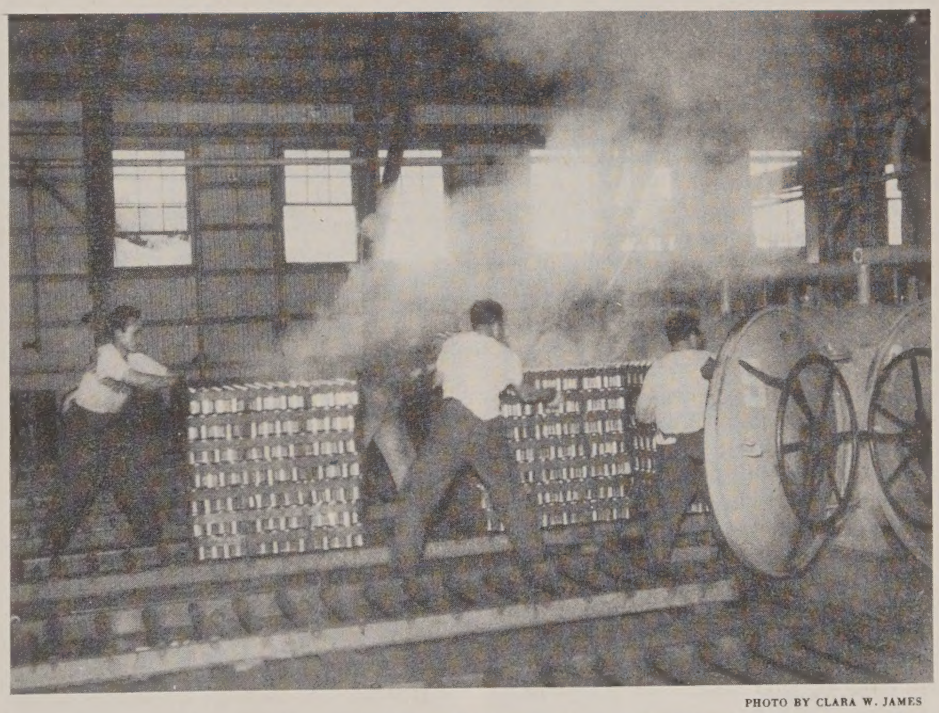


PHOTO BY CLARA W. JAMES

Above you see a few members of CRPA's Alaska cannery crew at work. They are hauling steaming hot cans of Alaska red salmon from the retorts. Work in the cannery when the fish are running is intense and the pent up energies of long months of preparation must flare out to process a large amount of fish in a very short time. The cans coming out of the cases are washed and stacked for cooling. After cooling they are cased and then at the close of the fishing season they are loaded on ships for transportation to Puget Sound and Astoria.

CRPA ALASKA HISTORY GOES BACK TO 1901

Sailing Ships used in Former times; Ice was problem

CRPA's Alaska history covers almost a half century. The company's first Alaska venture was in 1901 when a fleet of four vessels, the steam schooner Despatch, the bark Prussia, the schooner Forrester, and the scow schooner Antelope were sent to Nushagak. The Despatch lest Astoria early in March but found Bristol Bay full of ice and returned to Dutch Harbor where the crew built four small lighters, one of which was lost when towed to Nushagak later in the season. The Despatch carried a small steam tender the Occident on her deck and this craft was used to tow the lighters from ship to shore in unloading and loading the larger vessel. A Mr. Anderson acted as superintendent for the season, and despite construction problems brought home a pack of 24,175 cases. The following year Win Barry, well known former Astoria resident, was in charge of the expedition and despite a fishermen's strike packed about 29,000 cases.

The pack showed a general increase in following years. In 1907, Mr. Tom Wootton, Nushagak superintendent for many years afterward went north with Mr. L. O. Belland, then in charge and that year the pack totaled 51,000 cases, a remarkable pack for a two line cannery. All canning machinery had been manufactured in Astoria by the Astoria Iron Works.

Nushagak was operated until 1932 when the cannery was leased to the Alaska Packers Association. CRPA operations were resumed there in 1936 and continued too and including the year 1940 when war time limitations on travel and shipping, resulted in our operation there being joined with that of Libby, McNeill, & Libby, at the latter company's Ekuk Cannery, an arrangement which will carry through 1945. Plans are being made, however, for resumption of operations at Nushagak as soon as possible.

In 1910, CRPA built a cannery at Chignik, Alaska. Operations the first year were hindered by a determined opposition from canneries already established in that area. The ship sent north to Chignik arrived safely, but, shortly after arrival, a heavy storm came up and she was driven on the beach and lost with all her cargo. When word reached Astoria several days later two more vessels were immediately chartered, loaded with a duplicate cargo and dispatched north. Despite all the difficulties about 16,000 cases were packed that season. This pack to 28,967 cases the next year and 43,000 cases the following year. This cannery was sold to Alaska Packers in 1931. Prior to that time it was in charge of Captain Jim Osmund.

Crews of fishermen and cannery workers were sent north by sailing ship in the old days the trip taking from 14 to as high as 64 days. In 1918, the Nushagak expedition, along with a number of vessels was caught in the Bristol Bay ice pack and frozen in solidly for over a month. One ship was crushed by the ice and the crew taken in on CRPA's St. Nicholas. Some of the old sailing vessels used in addition to the St. Nicholas were the Reuce, Chillicothe, and Tonawanda.

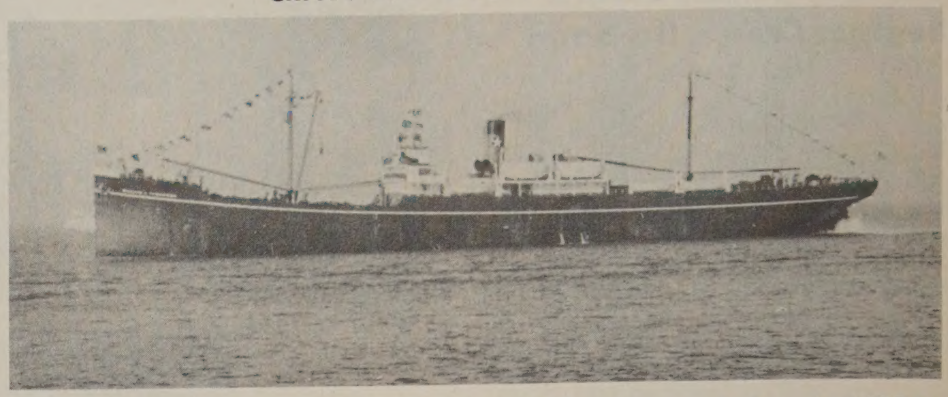
In 1925, the CRPA purchased the steamship Memnon which was used until 1939—when it was sold to British interests. In 1934, the Memnon was converted into floating cannery and processed fish in the peninsula area from 1934 to 1938.

The 8,800 ton steamship W. L. Thompson was purchased in 1938, and refitted for the industry as a passenger and supply carrier. The W. L. Thompson went north in 1937 to 1940 inclusive, but when the war started was taken over by the government and is still plying in government service.

Naknek Built

In 1938, CRPA built a modern four line high speed cannery at Naknek, Alaska. Alaska Superintendent William Wootton went north to direct construction and directly operated the cannery in 1939 and 1940. War conditions prevented operation in 1941 but operation was resumed in 1943 under Superintendent Ralph Hendrickson who has continued in charge to the present season.

CRPA'S S. S. W. L. THOMPSON



Eighty-eight hundred ton vessel purchased in 1938 and named in honor of CRPA's board chairman. Used from 1938 to 1940 inclusive to service Naknek and Nushagak canneries. Requisitioned in 1941 for government service and still serving Uncle Sam.

Clifton Veteran Returns

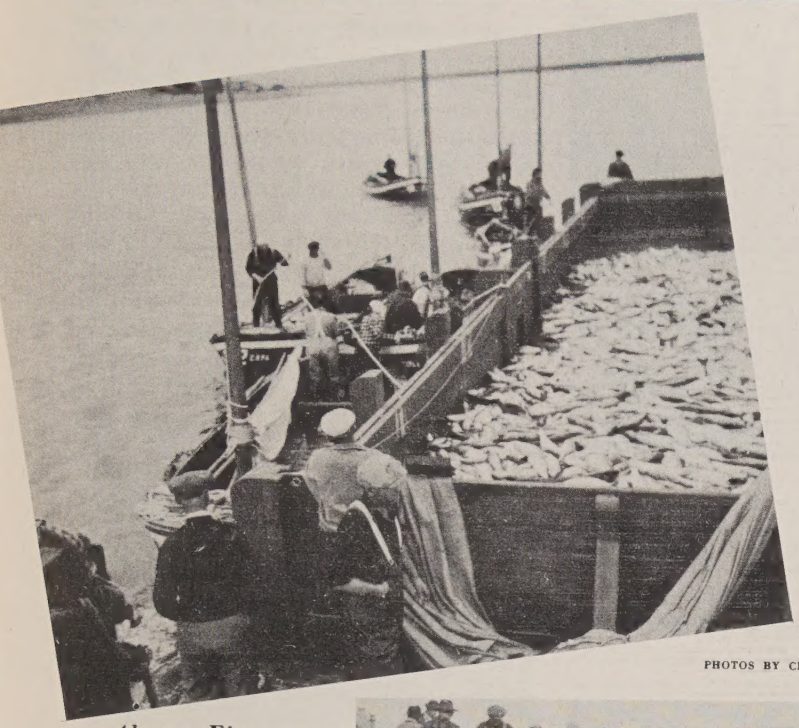
Sergeant Tony Radich, son of Mr. and Mrs. Marko Radich, of Clifton, returned to his home recently to visit his parents after 45 months' service in Africa, Sicily, and Italy, part of which time he served under the command of Colonel Elliott Roosevelt. While on leave he was married to Miss Margaret Turina, of Astoria.

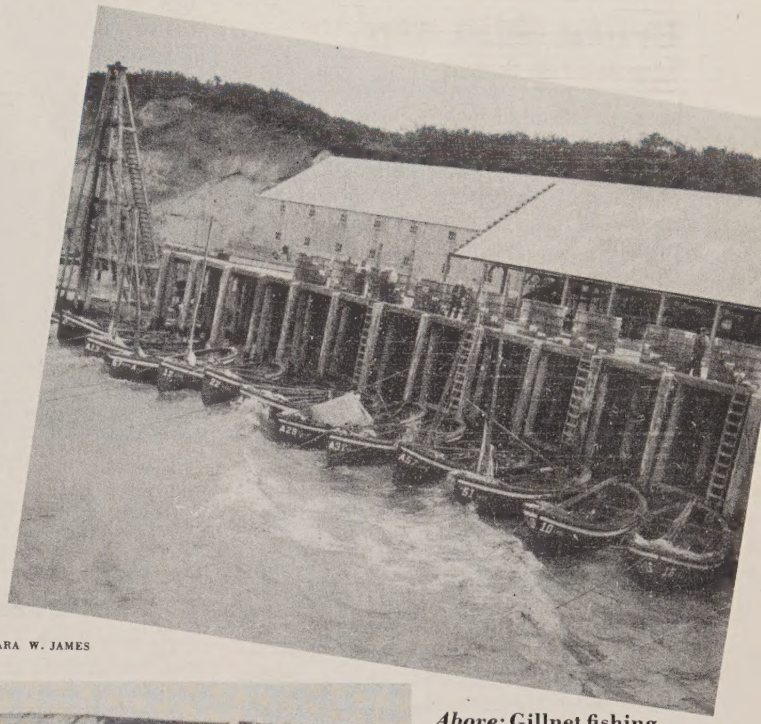
SAILING MASTER

Captain Harry Phister

He piloted the St. Nicholas and Chillicothe in the days when cannery crews went to Alaska the hard way. Storm, ice, and the dangers of the deep are old stories to this sturdy mariner.

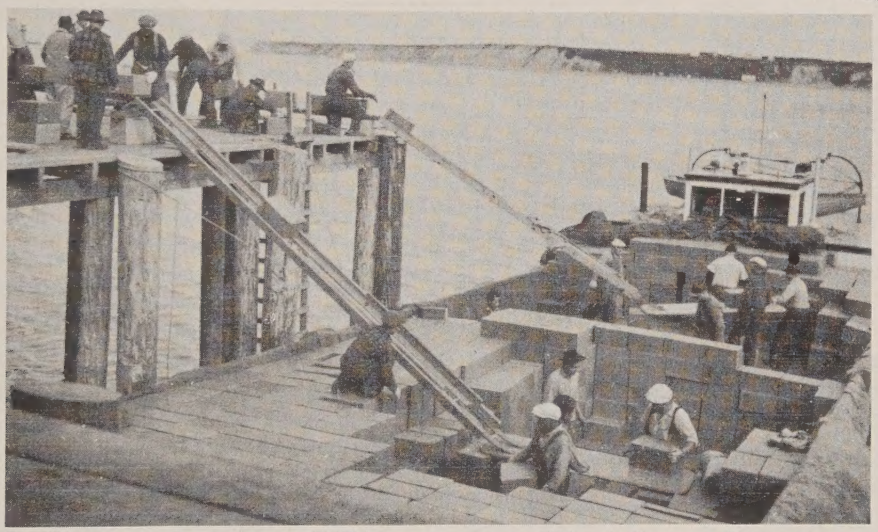
ALASKA SCENES





PHOTOS BY CLARA W. JAMES

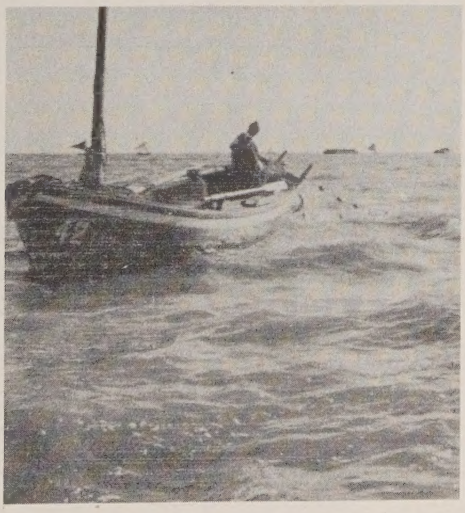
Above: First scow load of fish received at Nankek Cannery in 1944.



Loading canned salmon on CRPA power scow at Naknek Cannery for transportation to Liberty ship in Bristol Bay.

Above: Gillnet fishing boats tied up to Naknek Cannery. Bluestone tanks for net dipping on dock.

Below, left: CRPA Fishermen—Bristol Bay.



Below, center: Hauling net—Bristol Bay.

Below, right: Mending nets—Bristol Bay.

Opening Salmon Catch is Fair; Crabs Pick Up

The commercial salmon fishing season on the Columbia River opened April 30, at noon, with returns, while light, generally appearing to be better than for the opening days of 1944. Fish were fairly well scattered along the river with probably the lightest catches taken in the lower river.

Toll caught salmon were being brought in satisfying numbers but the general average weight was very light with the percentage of small sometimes running as high as ten to one over the large fish.

Crab production bore out the prior prediction of Production Manager Floyd Wright that all that was needed was a spell of good weather. Company production for the last week in April and first week in May was running about 10 tons per day. Starting shortly before April 1, crab meat was diverted from the fresh market and was being packed in 12 ounce friction top tins for the frozen foods trade.

Bottom fish production was spotty as the weather. While there was some improvement in storm conditions enough blows occurred during the month to keep the draggers running out and then in again instead of really getting down to fishing. Receipts such as they have been have been mostly rock cod. The entire catch is being filleted for army orders.

"PINKY"

"Mailman" and general factotum of CRPA's office. The smile stays there. Until she knows about it it just hasn't happened.

BOWLING CHAMP

Anton Stanich

Veteran CRPA fisherman paired with "Pappy" Moore won the annual Oregon Journal handicap on Portland alleys, topping several hundred expert keglers.

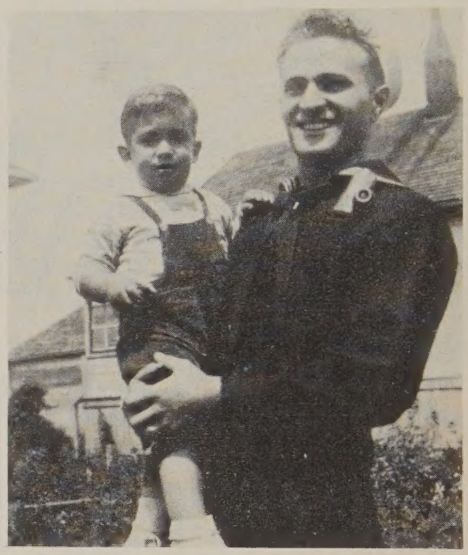
Mooring Basin

Astoria and Clatsop County fishery and community interests have combined in an attempt to interest the federal government, through the U. S. Engineers, in a project to construct an adequate moorage basin for fishing craft in this harbor. With the fishing fleet increasing in each year both in number of boats and in the size of craft used in the various operations, the need for such facilities has become a matter of vital importance. Astoria cannot become the fishing center that production possibilities indicate, unless arrangements are made for better care for the fishing fleet.

New York Broker Here to Inspect CRPA Operations

E. W. Harrison, head of William H. Stanley, Inc., New York brokers house was a visitor in Astoria recently and made a thorough inspection of CRPA's operations, plants, and equipment. His company has represented CRPA in the New York market for many years. Mr. Stanley spent considerable time on the west coast getting a first hand view of the current fisheries picture. He was formerly a resident of Seattle, Wash.

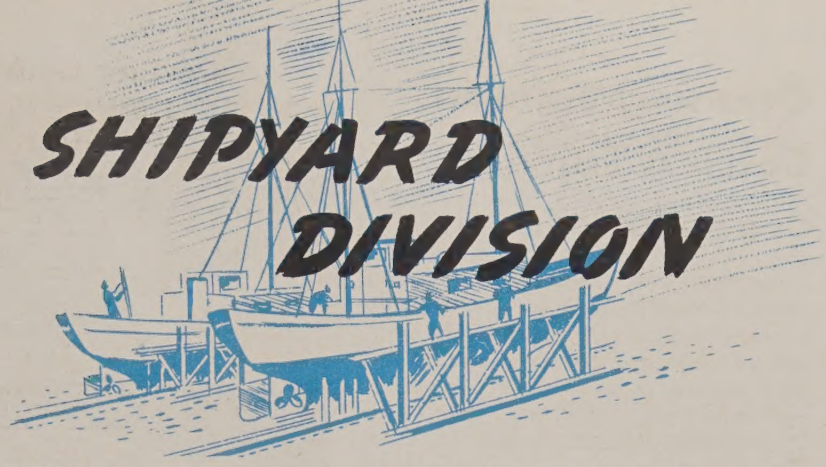
IN SOUTH PACIFIC



Sveten J. Kustura, 2nd class radioman, former Occident fisherman, now serving Uncle Sam in the South Pacific. Formerly fished for CRPA at Occident station. Will teach the young man in his arms the craft when he returns.

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES

Left to right: Joe Craig, biologist; Milo Moore, director; Arne Suomela, biologist; C. H. Ellis, superintendent of hatcheries; C. L. Anderson, assistant director; J. C. Claussen, engineer; and H. N. Jackson, public relations. Caught by the *Bumble Bee* photographer during a recent visit to Astoria. Mr. Moore has inspired his staff with an enthusiasm directed toward an intelligent development of the Columbia River and Puget Sound fisheries. No picayune plans for this group. They want to do big things in a big way. Astoria fishing interests enjoyed their visit.



New Drag Boats to be Launched in Two Months

CRPA shipyard in addition to handling a load of repair work which involved the hauling out of the water of 12 craft during April has been concentrating on the completion of the two new 76 foot drag boats Kiska and Swiftwater. The houses are being constructed for the draggers and Superintendent Bill Wootton expects to have them ready for launching shortly after July 1.

Another big job at the yard has been fabrication of material and the construction of bait tanks for the tuna fleet for the coming season.

Most of the fishing vessels hauled up for the winter in the yard have gone back to operation and only three craft remain to be moved.

CRPA SECRETARY

E. H. Nelson

E. H. "Ted" Nelson, CRPA corporation secretary has had many years of CRPA service. He started to work for the company first in 1919 going to Nushagak cannery in 1919, 1920, and 1921. He then spent five years going to school returning to CRPA in 1926 to leave that year for the company's operation at Chignik, Alaska. He spent six years with the Chignik operation and then left the company service for a four year tenure in various capacities with the General Petroleum Company. Nelson returned to CRPA service in 1935 and has been steadily with the company ever since service as bookkeeper, auditor, comptroller, and was appointed corporation secretary in 1943. His familiarity with the details of both the Columbia River and Alaska operations of the company make him a valuable company officer.

SHIPS LOG

Shipwright and Mrs. Leslie Trueblood welcomed a new daughter, Carol Ann, on March 30th. The young lady weighed seven pounds and one ounce.

Harold T. Fitcha, chief aviation ordnance machinists mate, is spending a 30-day leave with his parents Mr. and Mrs. Tom Fitcha. He has been in the Navy three and one-half years, last on the airplane carrier Ticonderoga in the Pacific.

New employees at the Shipyard are Walter Dorsey, Harvey Pilgard, Karl Bock and Anton Aho, shipwrights; George Fisher, welder; and Roy Beatty blacksmith.

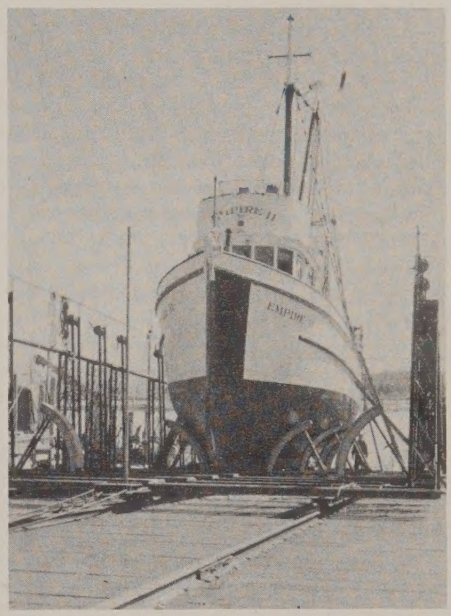
More and better ideas are Needed; think about this

Many good ideas are being dropped into CRPA Suggestion Boxes and a new list of awards will be announced next month.

However, we are going to have to comment on a too common trend of these suggestions. The fact is that too many of them are based on trying to enhance the personal comfort of the employees who make them. CRPA wants to make its employees as comfortable as possible but we want them to think for us as well as themselves. Suggestions to better working conditions are valuable. We want them and will carefully consider them, but we also want your ideas on how to increase production; to increase efficiency, to reduce waste; and to develop safety.

It is in these types of suggestions, where they prove to have an economic and practical application, that the big "golden eggs" of the entire suggestion plan are hidden.

Remember, too, that it is the "idea" we want. Don't hesitate to make a reasonable suggestion just because you do not feel qualified to work out the change to the last detail. We have engineers, mechanics, and management experts who can do that. Just give us the ideas and remember: Efficiency, Waste, Safety, and More Production.



The combination drag-tuna motor vessel Empire II, on the marine railway of CRPA shipyard for through hull repairs.

CRPA Tuna Visits Belgium Hospital

Here is another story about how widely traveled CRPA products actually are. It was contained in a letter received by CRPA's Treasurer, Floyd Wright, from Captain Harold R. Hines, U.S.A. Captain Hines writes that after contacting a severe case of lead poisoning in Belgium, he was confined for a time to a hospital near the border of that country. Appropos to a general discussion in the ward he made the statement, based on prior experience that the best canned tuna was packed in Astoria. A nurse hearing the remark came around shortly afterward with a half pound can of CRPA's fancy Oregon albacore. Captain Hines adds "The tuna was in good shape and really tasted good. It is very seldom you get fish here let alone tuna. In fact it is the first I have seen on this side."

Captain Hines was formerly connected with the Seattle-Los Angeles Auto Freight and often visited Astoria in connection with that company's operation.

CRPA Has New Item; Frozen Razor Clams

During extremely low morning tides, which prevailed during the first part of April, many tons of razor clams were dug commercially. The bulk of these originated from the beaches of Washington, covering a 20-mile area in the Long Beach vicinity. Razor clams are shipped in 50 pound boxes to our cold storage plant where they are immersed in hot water to loosen the shells to aid in removing the clam meat. They are then carefully washed, cleaned, rewashed and packed in five pound friction top tins for freezing.

Clams are in the delicacy class, being very desirable for the preparation of many tasty dishes and chowders. The commercial clamming season is comparatively short, and until recently the greater percentage has been canned for commercial distribution. By having this fine seafood available in frozen form, many large hotels, restaurants and institutions have availed themselves of this product to place in freezers for use during the off-season. The fine acceptance of this product in the five pound tins indicates the sales possibilities of this item when made available to the distributive trade packed in our standard 12 ounce lithographed friction top tins in frozen form. Plans are being made to permanently add this product to our present line of top-quality seafoods.

Delicious, delicately flavored razor clams, shelled, cleaned and frozen in five pound tins and available for use in chowders and many other tasty dishes.

Razor clams fresh from the clean white sand beaches of Oregon and Washington. Shells are easily removed when clam is dipped in hot water. Length 4½ to 6 inches.

THE RAZOR CLAM

Top: Clam in shell with neck and "digger" extended. Clams swim and dig on "jet propulsion" principle drawing water through neck and expelling it through digger. Bottom: Shelled clam showing principal organs. Center: Cleaned clam with all viscera removed in CRPA processing. Note fat showing on digger portion in upper center picture.